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CONTRAS, STUNG BY COMPLAINTS, PLAN SHAKEUP
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The chief U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebel group, torn by internal dissent and charges of mismanagement, is undergoing a behind-the-scenes shakeup that includes appointment of a Miami-based exiled businessman to coordinate its financial and political operations.

Leonardo Somarriba was named secretary general of the United Nicaraguan Opposition, UNO, last month, but no announcement was made because, according to Nicaraguans close to UNO, admission of existing problems could undercut President Reagan's request for \$100 million in military and other aid.

The Democratic-controlled House is scheduled to reconsider that package on April 15, after defeating it last month. Reagan's proposal narrowly cleared the Republican-dominated Senate on March 27.

Somarriba's appointment in effect, to be UNO's chief executive officer represents an apparent shift in power away from the umbrella group's three publicly known directors: Adolfo Calero, who also heads the chief rebel army, the CIA-organized Nicaraguan Democratic Force, FDN; and two former Sandinista government officials, Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo.

It follows mounting complaints from Nicaraguan exiles that UNO created at White House urging last June had failed to achieve either political or military unity in the war against Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government. The exiles have also criticized UNO for alleged mishandling of U.S. funds and nepotism.

The Nicaraguan Business Council, a group of conservative exiled business leaders, outlined the complaints in a heated, private meeting with the three UNO directors in Miami on Jan. 18, according to several participants who insisted on anonymity.

With Somarriba acting as their spokesman, the Nicaraguan businessmen criticized UNO's leadership for its internal bickering, subservience to the United States and the naming of cronies to key jobs, the participants said.

The participants said Calero reacted angrily to the criticism. One businessman described Calero's response as "petulant, cocky, rude" but added that Cruz and Robelo were receptive.

FDN spokesman Bosco Matamoros said Calero was traveling and unavailable for comment.

In a separate report, a group of former FDN commanders, known as the Nicaraguan Coalition of Opposition to the Regime, criticized the FDN's "huge, inefficient bureaucracy" and charged that "cronyism and nepotism (were) rampant at all levels."

Then last month, the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm, reported that it could not track \$7.1 million in U.S. aid provided to UNO and funneled through Miami-based "brokers" to Central America. The money was part of \$27 million in U.S. non-lethal aid.

GAO's findings focused specific attention on Calero's use of his brother, Mario, and his brother-in-law, Aristedes Sanchez, to operate the FDN's supply and financial networks.

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citing these relationships in a Senate speech, Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, called Adolfo Calero "a Ferdinand Marcos before his time" and suggested that their bank accounts be checked "to find out just where the taxpayers' dollars are going." 2

Mario Calero and the FDN have denied improper use of the money, and its spokesman Matamoros has even distributed affidavits from FDN suppliers asserting that Mario Calero has never requested nor received illegal payments.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Somarriba, 48, said he would try to improve UNO's efficiency and increase the cooperation among the three directors who have often been at odds over conduct of the war. He said he is now preparing a plan to reorganize UNO.

In a three-page critique given to the UNO directors, the Nicaraguan Business Council said "the highest standards of administration, control and efficiency" were needed in handling U.S. funds "to guarantee the continuation of the aid."

The council, whose members are considered strong Contra backers, said UNO must also "reaffirm the Nicaraguan character of the movement" and "forge a genuine and effective unity among UNO's leaders" and with other rebel forces outside UNO.

"To seek to consolidate (personal) political positions at this moment hampers the goal of unity," the council said. A copy of the report was obtained by The AP.

While not discussing details of the January meeting, the U.S.-educated Somarriba said the business council "presented a private paper in a private and constructive way (citing) things that were missing in this effort. ... There was some very frank discussion about it."

Accepting the characterization of his new role as "chief executive officer" for UNO, Somarriba said he would try to "establish a structure so the three members (of UNO's directorate) can work together. ... I personally have no political ambitions," he said.

As a businessman and investor in Nicaragua, Somarriba was considered close to Jorge Salazar, the leader of a business group opposed to the Sandinistas. In November 1980, Salazar was gunned down by Sandinista police, who claimed he was caught with a supply of weapons. Somarriba said he was subsequently jailed for several weeks and left for the United States after being freed.

Several Nicaraguan exiles said Somarriba has had a close working relationship with the CIA. Former FDN leader Edgar Chamorro said when he was recruited by the CIA into the FDN's directorate in late 1982, Somarriba accompanied a senior CIA official to an initial recruitment meeting in Miami. Somarriba denied working with the CIA.

Some prominent Nicaraguan exiles have publicly attacked UNO's directors as hand-picked by the Reagan administration and lacking significant popular support inside Nicaragua and within the exile community.

"UNO is designed to do battle in Congress, not to do battle in the front lines, with the people of Nicaragua," said Silvio Arguello-Cardenal, a vice-president of Nicaragua during the 1960s.

Rival rebel leaders, such as onetime Sandinista hero Eden Pastora, have complained that the funneling of U.S. aid through the FDN-dominated UNO is an attempt to subjugate other rebel organizations to the FDN and the United States.

UNO's directors have also fought among themselves over such issues as reducing human rights abuses by Contra troops - a problem publicly acknowledged by Cruz but vigorously disputed by Calero.